

Amendment to the Claims

1. **(Previously Presented)** A sterilization method for sterilizing an object to be sterilized within a chamber, the method comprising:

a decompression step of decompressing the chamber;

a hydrogen peroxide supply step of supplying hydrogen peroxide into the chamber after decompression;

an ozone supply step of supplying ozone into the chamber after supplying the hydrogen peroxide and before the chamber reaches atmospheric pressure;

a sterilization step of sterilizing the object to be sterilized by diffusing the hydrogen peroxide and ozone supplied within the chamber;

an exhaust step of exhausting gas from within the chamber after sterilization by the hydrogen peroxide and ozone; and

a plasma generation step of generating plasma in a residual hydrogen peroxide and ozone atmosphere within the chamber after exhausting the gas so that hydroxy radicals generated by the plasma discharge allow the object to be sterilized.

2. **(Previously Presented)** The sterilization method according to Claim 1, wherein said exhaust step comprises a decomposition step in which gas being exhausted from the chamber is broken down into oxygen and water.

3. **(Previously Presented)** The sterilization method according to Claim 1, wherein said exhaust step comprises a decomposition step in which the ozone in the gas being exhausted from the chamber is broken down.

4. **(Previously Presented)** The sterilization method according to Claim 1, wherein said sterilization step comprises a step of circulating the sterilization gas in the chamber.

5-11. (Cancelled)